

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Fessler Usa

Manufacturers Resource Center

FesslerUSA Reinvents Itself with Help from MRC

Client Profile:

FesslerUSA, founded in 1900, is a premier provider of garment dyed and dyeable knit apparel. The company is recognized as an industry leader for private label production and design services in the fashion tee market and serves a wide array of designers, labels and specialty stores. The family-owned and operated business is located in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania and employs 184 people.

Situation:

Fessler USA owner, Walter Meck, worked to reinvent the business due to the low-priced apparel competition overseas. The company turned to the Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for guidance and expertise in marketing, Lean manufacturing.

Solution:

MRC provided the training and support for FesslerUSA to develop a highly skilled management team, a first-class design support services department, and to incorporate lean marketing concepts geared to the garment industry. The company, working with MRC, became vertically integrated. They knit their own fabrics at their Deer Lake, Pennsylvania facility. The fabrics are cut using Gerber computerized, automated cutting equipment and sewn at one of their five Pennsylvania sewing facilities, thus guaranteeing 100 percent Made-in-the-USA. Fessler offers lower minimums and shorter lead times than offshore competitors and domestic companies that use sub-contractors for their production. Thus, the company maintains better consistency and quality for its customers, which translates into a more profitable future for Fessler. To meet their high-end customers' quality needs, FesslerUSA instituted their first quality system, designed with input from major customers and the assistance of MRC. This allowed the company to maintain continuous quality at each step of the production process. Computerized, automated, cutting equipment was installed as part of the production infrastructure transformation, and productivity increased by 23 percent.

Results:

- * Increased sales by 23 percent.
- * Increased employee compensation by 12 percent.
- * Increased number of employees by 13.1 percent.

Testimonial:

"MRC [Manufacturers Resource Center] made a difference and an investment in reinventing our future and supported our company in an industry most people would have written off. Our reinvention success is to some degree their success."

Walter Meck, CEO

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